

Untangled 3 – What About My Big Doubts?

Untangled Bumper

Welcome to Redemption Church in Plano Tx. My name is Chris Fluitt.

We are in our message series Untangled.

We have asked some big questions.

Week 1 – Can I still trust the Church? We talked church hurt...

Week 2 – Is the Bible still legit? We hit the major questions about the Bible... isn't it just a bunch of rules? Does it have contradictions? How can it matter to my life?

Today we are going to talk about doubts.

What About my Big Doubts?

I've had those moments where I wanted to believe something so badly, but my brain just wouldn't let me.

I wanted to trust that a relationship could be healed, or that the medical report wouldn't be the end, or that God was really listening to my prayers. I wanted to believe, but inside I also had some doubt.

In church, we don't always talk about these struggles in a practical way. Instead, we get caught up in what feels like *swirly spiritual talk* - ideas that sound holy but don't feel very tangible or helpful.

Faith is one of those words.

Believing is one of those words.

I've asked myself many times:

Do I believe enough? Do I have real faith?

What about my doubts?

And maybe you've had those same thoughts.

We Christians don't always have a good track record here.

We say stuff like... "Don't ask questions. Just believe harder."

But that doesn't really help, does it? Because doubt doesn't go away just because you ignore it. In fact, doubt usually grows in the dark.

We continue to silently think the same questions... *Do I believe enough? Do I have real faith? What about my doubts?*

Can we get a little more real?

We compartmentalize things. *Well, I believe this part of the Bible, but I struggle with that part. If I don't believe every single word perfectly, am I not a Christian? Am I out? Am I not going to heaven? Is it all or nothing? Can I struggle with some of it and still belong?*

Those are the questions people are afraid to ask - but they're the questions we need to bring into the light.

These are the questions we need to untangle.

Let's see what God says about this...

I want to share 3 powerful Bible stories about doubt and belief.

1. (Doubting) Thomas in John 20.

After the resurrection, the other disciples told Thomas...

“We have seen the Lord!” But Thomas said, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe” (John 20:25).

Now, many people call him *Doubting Thomas*. But notice what Jesus does. A

week later, Jesus shows up and says to Thomas...

“Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” (John 20:27)

Here’s the good news: Jesus didn’t rebuke Thomas for doubting. And He won’t rebuke you either.

Instead of rebuke, Jesus invites you to confess your questions and bring them into the open. And when you do, He’ll give you what you need in order to believe.

What does that look like?

- He might answer a prayer you’ve been praying.
- He might let you feel His presence in a fresh way.

- He might give you a word from Scripture that speaks right into your situation.
- He might even surround you with encouragement from another believer at just the right time.

Jesus knows what you need. And just like Thomas, He will meet you right where you are.

2 The desperate father in Mark 9.

His son is tormented, and he cries out to Jesus...

“...If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” Jesus replies, ““If you can’? Everything is possible for one who believes.” Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” (Mark 9:22-24).

Notice again - Jesus does not rebuke this man. He doesn’t shame him for having

doubts. But He does lovingly **point out the weakness**. The man said, “*If you can*” - and Jesus put His finger right on that phrase.

That’s what He’ll do for us too. He’ll expose the fragile places in our faith, not to condemn us, but to strengthen us.

And here’s something surprising and freeing:

You can have belief and unbelief in the same sentence.

You can have faith and doubt side by side. Honestly, I’m not sure we ever have 100% pure faith, because 100% would be *knowing*. And we don’t live by knowing - we live by faith.

So what do you do when you feel both belief and unbelief? You move forward anyway. You act on the part of you that believes.

- You can pray, even with questions in your heart.
- You can serve, even if you're not sure how it will all work out.
- You can forgive, even if your emotions aren't there yet.
- You can open the Word, even if you don't understand all of it.

Faith doesn't mean you never struggle. Faith means you act on what you do believe.

3 Jacob wrestling with God in Genesis 32.

In Genesis 32, Jacob literally wrestles through the night with God. And at the heart of the struggle, Jacob is asking questions. He says, *"What is your name? Who are you?"* (Genesis 32:29).

And here's the turning point: Jacob won't let go, God blesses him and gives him a brand-new name.

"Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome"
(Genesis 32:28).

Do you know what the name **Israel** means?
Israel - struggle with God.

That's not just Jacob's new identity - that's the identity of God's people. We are Israel. We are the people who struggle with God.

God values struggle! The people who struggle with God are still God's people. The ones who don't let go, even while asking hard questions, are the ones God claims as His own.

So don't be afraid of your questions. Don't be afraid to struggle with God. He welcomes it. And just like Jacob, you won't

leave the same. You'll leave blessed. You'll leave with a new identity.

Those are 3 powerful bible stories... but here is the real question we may be asking.

How do you grow your faith so it overcomes your doubt?

The Bible is clear - faith grows by acting. Faith isn't measured by what you *know* but by what you *do*. And sometimes that doing looks like struggling, asking, questioning, and not letting go until you've heard from God.

3 practical ways to grow your faith as you struggle with God: progressive click

1. Pray your doubts honestly.

Just like the father in Mark 9, don't fake it. Say, "Lord, I believe - help my unbelief." That's struggle. You don't

have to clean up your doubts before you come to Jesus. Prayer is the place where faith starts to rise.

2. **Put your faith into practice.**

Belief isn't just in your head - it shows up in your hands and feet. Forgive someone. Serve someone. Take a step of obedience, even if you're still unsure. Every action of obedience is like lifting a weight that strengthens your faith.

3. **Stay close to God's people.**

Faith grows in community. Thomas was with the disciples when Jesus showed up. Don't isolate in your doubt. Join a Connect Group, pray with someone, share your questions. Struggle isn't something you have to do alone. Israel is a people - not just a person.

Faith grows when you *act*. If you want to overcome doubt, don't just ask, *Do I believe enough?* Ask, *What am I going to do next? What step am I going to take as I struggle with God?*

IT'S OKAY TO QUESTION, IT'S NOT OKAY TO BE INACTIVE

Faith welcomes questions, but faith also requires movement.

Thomas had his questions - but he spoke up.

The father had unbelief - but he still cried out to Jesus.

Jacob struggled with God all night - but he refused to let go.

What made the difference wasn't that they had theological training.

It wasn't that they could quote Scripture.

It wasn't that they had all the answers.

What made the difference was that they acted.

Doubt held in silence leads to paralysis.

Doubt brought into action opens the door for God to move.

It's okay to question - it's not okay to sit still.

DO I HAVE ENOUGH FAITH?

Now, some of you might still be asking: *But what about my big doubts? How do I know if I really have faith? How do I know if I have enough faith?*

Let's look at the examples we just talked about:

- Thomas speaking up with his doubts - **that looks like faith.**
- The father crying, "I believe, help my unbelief" - **that looks like faith.**

- Jacob struggling through the night with God, refusing to let go until he had an answer - **that looks like faith.**

Faith isn't just certainty in your head. It's showing up, speaking up, and not letting go. (James 2:17; James 2:22; Hebrews 11:6).

And if that's what faith looks like, then look at your own life:

- You're here in church today - **that looks like faith.** (Hebrews 10:25)
- You lifted your voice in worship - **that looks like faith.** (Hebrews 13:15)
- You pray honestly, even with your doubts - **that looks like faith.** (Philippians 4:6)
- You open the Bible and start applying it to your life - **that looks like faith.** (James 1:22)

The real question isn't, *Do I believe enough?*

The real question is, *What am I doing with the faith I already have?*

If you want to know your faith, **look at your actions. Look at your life. That's where your faith shows up.** (James 2:18).

Musicians

Are you ready to activate your faith?

Three Calls to Action:

1. **Pray one honest prayer this week about your doubts.** Don't hide them. Struggle with God in prayer - **that looks like faith.**
2. **Take one faith action this week.** Don't just think about faith - do something with it. This could be your moment to take a bold next step:
 - Confess Jesus openly, maybe for the very first time.

- Be baptized and go public with your faith.
- Step up to serve on the Dream Team.
- Begin giving and trusting God with your finances.
- Or finally commit to a Connect Group and grow in community.

These are the steps where faith stops being information and becomes transformation - **that looks like faith.**

3. **Right Now: Don't leave without bringing your doubts to Jesus.**

We've opened up a **prayer space** right here in the front. This is your response moment to struggle honestly with God, to pray "I believe - help my unbelief."
This looks like faith.